



2012

*BLUEPRINT FLORIDA*



# ***BLUEPRINT FLORIDA***

***“What is to become of an independent statesman, one who will bow the knee to no idol, who will worship nothing as divinity but truth, virtue, and his country? I will tell you; he will be regarded more by posterity than those who worship hounds and horses; and although he will not make his fortune, he will make the fortune of his country.”***

-John Adams

2012

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the author.

*Table of Contents*

Introduction

Chapter 1: Defining our Mission 14

Chapter 2: Confronting the Brutal Facts 22

Chapter 3: Our Agenda and Goals 42

Chapter 4: Leadership 52

Chapter 5: 9 Ideas to Change the Culture 64

Chapter 6: Legacy 84



## INTRODUCTION

Had enough?

Are you tired of politics as usual —the partisanship, the petty bickering? Tired of politicians who make campaign promises but don't deliver results?

You're not alone. In fact, a 2010 Pew research poll revealed 78 percent of Americans DISTRUSTED GOVERNMENT "some or most of the time". According to Pew, the number of people with trust in the U.S. government is now the LOWEST RECORDED LEVEL IN HALF A CENTURY. Respondents, by percentages of 76 percent or higher, stated their three major reasons for distrust are that elected officials:

- Care only about their careers
- Are influenced by special interests
- Are reckless and out-of-touch

These concerns aren't limited to the federal government. The same poll reported that less

than HALF – *a mere 42% of Americans* – believed “state government has a positive effect on [their] daily lives”, down from 62 percent in October 1997.

Just think about that for a moment

How have trust, confidence, and belief in government fallen SO far, SO fast? What are the consequences for the FUTURE? How do we change course, and inspire voters to believe in BETTER?

While many good Floridians are working hard to get this state back on track, *harder work remains in the days ahead.*

Consider:

- Nearly HALF (48%) of Florida home mortgage holders owe more than what their house is worth.
- Unemployment statewide is at record high rates not seen since the early eighties.
- The state budget is facing shortfalls and pressures that are crippling growth and opportunity.

And, the sad but undeniable reality is that 65% of Floridians believe the current economy will “*stay the same*” or “*worsen*” within the next five years.

Floridians know the problem does not lie with our *system* of government — a system that has produced the most prosperous and free people in history. Instead, they have become cynical toward elected officials who have been taken captive by the status quo and of leaders who focus more on the next *election* than the next *generation*.

But we know the public is right. The culture of politics is broken. We feel it too. One member relates a story that illustrates just how our legislative culture is broken: A group of scientists conducted an experiment in which a ladder was placed in a cage of five gorillas. Each day a bunch of bananas was placed at the top of the ladder. When an individual gorilla attempted to mount the ladder to retrieve the bananas, all five of the gorillas were sprayed with cold water. To avoid the negative consequence, the other gorillas in the cage began to attack any gorilla that attempted to get the fruit. Eventually all five gorillas



abandoned their attempts to climb the ladder. The scientists took the experiment a step further by replacing one of the five gorillas in the cage. When the new gorilla attempted to climb the ladder, he was immediately attacked. In fact, all five of the original gorillas were replaced, one by one, with gorillas that had never been subjected to the cold water deterrent. Despite this, each new gorilla quickly adapted to the "system" and helped to attack the uninitiated gorilla.

This, unfortunately, is today's legislature. No one has a viable explanation for persistent and negative conditions and habits. How can we explain how members who have served many years in both chambers and have been elevated to positions of great responsibility willingly trade significant policy achievements that would benefit Florida for trinkets sought by lobbyists.

In 2011, Leadership Florida's annual survey of Floridians revealed that 77 percent of Floridians believe state government leaders do what is right for the state "some of the time" or "never." Dissatisfaction with government

leaders continues to grow, as Floridians realize with ever-greater conviction — government is broken because elected officials fail. Yet it seems the cycle continues, year after year.

Like the one in the gorilla cage, *a culture has developed*- a culture few question. No one can explain how such things are possible; it is now simply habit. We must break the habit. It's bad governance. And it's wrong.

To respond to these realities our elected officials must work in unity with our citizens, and the private sector. This unity is not possible if Floridians lack faith in their elected officials. We must address that. Florida can't afford to continue on its current path. Voters deserve real reforms... real change... and real, verifiable RESULTS.

This book represents a year of thoughtful collaboration by a group of citizen legislators who were committed to the belief that citizen trust in their elected officials could be restored. We gathered to discuss our thoughts and experiences, we attended seminars to glean ideas, we read books by those who have studied the structures successfully used by great

organizations, we solicited written responses to key questions from each member on critical topics, and finally, culminated our work in the fall of this year.

This process revealed an unmistakable reality: the difference between statesmen versus status quo.

First, for an elected official to serve as a leader, he must be a statesman. True "statesmen" operate only in the long-term best interests of the public — free from the constraints of self-interest and special interests. Instead of promoting 'statesmanship' the current system often promotes a status quo that embodies many of the attributes that cause the lack of confidence and trust that our citizens resent. Those who slip into the status quo model find themselves catering to the special interest - those with short-term interests and limited vision. This limited vision spirals down to a simple agenda of self-advancement driven by the special interest.

The path of the special interest appears easy and rewarding. The special interest are represented by well-meaning, likeable people

who may even become friends. Any elected official, at anytime (even one who has begun as a statesman), can descend into status quo leadership that lacks courage and conviction unless steps are taken ahead of time to prevent the descent. Unlike the path of least resistance, the statesman's path appears harder more treacherous and trying. And, in the short term it is.

Second, real statesmanship also requires recommitting oneself each day to stand for principle. It calls on us to make hard decisions today to avoid even harder decisions in the future. In the end, it is not a question of doing things because they are easy or hard ... but rather because they are RIGHT. But often, because the wrong way of doing things has been allowed to dominate for a long time, doing what is *right* can be very, very hard.

We want to break the habit. We have decided that we must confront that "gorilla" culture now. It's easy to believe that you and your peers will be the exception to the rule in the future; that you will be the ones that break with nonsensical traditions and habits and leads with

courage and common sense. But the truth is if these realities are not confronted head on — now— while we are still fresh to public office, we, like the gorillas, will fall into broken cultural patterns.

We know the system is broken. We've decided to fix it.

## Chapter 1



### Defining Our Mission

*“Underlying most arguments against the free market is a lack of belief in freedom itself.”* – Milton Friedman

Search the Internet for any successful Fortune 500 corporation, charitable institution, or small business, and you’re sure to discover its mission – *the very reason for its existence*. Now conduct a search for the mission of the Florida Legislature.

You won’t find one. How can that be?

Make no mistake. Every special interest in the country has a definitive plan for each and every legislative session. The special interests measure their effectiveness by how much of their agenda is accomplished. It's time the people of Florida fought back. If the special interests have a plan, we need to have one too.

Though the largest corporations in the U.S. certainly affect the lives of their employees and customers, their influence pales in comparison to the ***effect that Florida's government has on its over 19 million residents.*** A highly populated, economically diverse state with a \$70 billion dollar budget, Florida's highs and lows are bellwethers for the rest of the nation. And yet, Florida's legislative mission is nowhere to be found. How can voters expect us to deliver solutions without a clearly defined mission?

The importance of Florida's legislative body cannot be underestimated. The Florida House is closest and most accountable to the people. As one member observed, at 120 members, it is an abundant source of potential for fulfilling our Constitutional responsibilities. The Florida House can help lead Florida with a clearly defined mission.

A state is not a corporation. And yet, the citizens of Florida are more heavily invested in our state's success than any corporate investor. One member aptly described the relationship between Florida and her citizens this way:

- The Florida Constitution: The framework and by-laws that guide our actions
- The Florida Legislature: Elected to lead as the Board of Directors
- Florida's Governor: Elected to serve as CEO
- The People of Florida: The shareholders invested in Florida's success

As members of the Florida Legislature, we have a responsibility and accountability to our "shareholders"- to our constituencies, to the electorate with whom we have a sacred trust. We can't carry out our responsibilities without a mission.



### **Our Mission**

We believe the mission of the Florida Legislature is threefold:

- To produce a balanced, accountable budget that's fully transparent.
- To create a legislative culture of purpose, integrity, and energy that propels the state forward.
- To deliver real solutions that promotes prosperity and creates opportunity for our citizens.

### **Producing a balanced, accountable budget that's fully transparent.**

The budget should reflect the values and priorities of Florida's people. We will zealously protect our constitutional oath of office to ensure that we are accountable to our constituents on how the resources they give government are expended and that every expenditure is made only with legislative approval. As part of this obligation we will strive for a level of transparency in setting priorities, and expending funds never before achieved.

## **Creating a Legislative Culture of Purpose, Integrity, and Energy**

The campaigns that brought us to the Florida House have resulted in political victory, but the benefits of campaigning are invaluable to our success in the Legislature. Campaigning allows us to continually hone our philosophy and understand the issues that most concern our citizens. Greeting voters at the door of their homes and in our communities provides constant grounding -consistent and immediate reminders of whom we are here to serve. We must never become cynical about these values. Walt Disney espoused the principle *"No cynicism allowed."* The resulting culture of Disney Magic has continued to permeate the business he formed well after his passing. In the same spirit, we refuse to participate in the cynical attitudes that dominate so much of politics. We will create a culture of purpose, integrity, and energy- one that stands in amazement at the privilege we have to serve our state, and is unaffected by the media and special interests that seek to distract us from our mission.

At Microsoft, Bill Gates has implemented a regular tradition known as "Think Week", during which he solicits ideas about the future of Microsoft from engineers throughout the company. Gates reads and

provides personal feedback on each idea submitted. The concept? If you have an idea, you deserve to be heard. In our culture of purpose, integrity, and energy, we will value great ideas. Rather than quibble over the party or position of the idea's author, we'll spend our energy on researching and implementing the most innovative solutions for the benefit of Florida citizens. The focus of this book is on this part of our mission statement. If we can successfully build this culture we can deliver real solutions that promote prosperity and create opportunity for our citizens.

### **Delivering real solutions that promote prosperity and create opportunity for our citizens.**

A plan for achieving bold policy must be driven by great ideas, not by fear. Ronald Reagan advised, "We in government should learn to look at our country with the eyes of the entrepreneur, seeing possibilities where others see only problems." A bold agenda produces inspiring policy and measurable results, rather than hollow rhetoric and partisan reward. As representatives, we must listen well. By listening, we can benefit from the wealth of ideas generated by those who elected us and also from our colleagues. By maintaining our focus on this principle, we will accomplish more than putting out fires, and send a

clear message to special interests that our allegiance and efforts belong to the people of Florida.



## Chapter 2

# Confronting the Brutal Facts

*“A government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect, and promises the cure for which we are seeking. - A balance of powers in the government so that no one group or special interest could hope to dominate.”*

*— James Madison*

Before we discuss our solutions to the problems our legislative culture faces, we have to stop and assess the current political realities. We must, as Jim Collins says, “Confront the Brutal Facts” of our current culture.

In our discussions, we committed to being honest. We committed to talking not only about what we want to accomplish, but also to openly discussing the barriers that, left unchecked, will hinder the accomplishment of our mission. In *Good to Great*, Jim Collins explains what happens when an organization simply refuses to face the realities about its circumstances. An example of the phenomenon is the demise of Blockbuster, the movie rental powerhouse that dominated the market in the late 1990's. Blockbuster's leadership had grown stale and come to rest on its laurels, squelching innovative ideas, discounting changing conditions in the industry. When "little upstart" Netflix arrived on the scene and began to deliver DVDs to viewers' homes, Blockbuster ignored the huge cost savings the model represented and dismissed online rentals as "a niche market". Refusing to contemplate the challenges facing it, they instead declared Netflix as a non-viable competitor: "We have not seen a business model that is financially viable in the long term in this arena." By 2010, Blockbuster had declared bankruptcy. Netflix had over 23 million subscribers. Blockbuster simply refused to face the brutal facts.

We have chosen instead to confront them. To have an honest discussion of what's wrong about our legislative culture and what can be done about it. The

simple truth is that we can't afford to do nothing. We have to make the tough choices today so that our children don't have to face the consequences tomorrow.

In response to the question, "What are the brutal facts about the culture that you feel we need to confront?" members came alive with suggestions and first-term horror stories:

- Special interest groups and lobbyists have excessive influence and power in the process.
- The special interests generate too many bills that protect themselves, while legislators generate too few bills that protect the people of Florida.
- There is too much money and too little accountability in the process.
- Leadership pressures to act without enough time for discussion, conversation, and debate.
- There is too much legislation that doesn't address the real problems Florida faces.
- The federal government's overreach is holding our state back.



- Committee chairmen exercise discretionary authority to benefit personal goals instead of the best interests of Floridians.
- Too many unwritten rules govern the process.
- The process is often autocratic not democratic, and based on purely personal considerations.
- People take their own bills too personally, distorting priorities and wasting the limited resources of time and energy.
- Bills can be held up due to an unpopular Senate companion.
- Members forget they are part of a team that's supposed to be serving the citizens of Florida.
- Members are satisfied with offering short-term solutions while allowing the long-term problems to persist.

Many of these issues are rooted in the unholy trinity that results when the leadership has failed to create a great culture that puts forward an agenda. When this is not done, the inordinate influence of

special interests, self-promotion, and self-preservation flourish.

## **The Undue Influence of the Special interests**

As our State Constitution's opening lines recognize, power is inherent in politics. If "all political power is inherent in the people" then when that power is used to benefit special interests and lobbyists, not citizens and taxpayers, we know that the government is broken. When our government is not committed to the people, it falls prey to competing agendas – all driven by special interests.

Many members recounted their dismay over finding that, too often in our legislative culture, *who's powerful*, not *what's right for Floridians*, rules the day.

### ***Policy . . . Not power should be the criteria***

*"...A freshman member filed a bill during his first session. When the special interests successfully added an amendment to the Senate bill that he strongly opposed, he killed the amendment. In the next session, the same special interests sought to have the same amendment inserted on a new bill*

sponsored by a House colleague. The lobbyist falsely claimed that leadership supported the language, and even went so far as to contact the legislative aide of the House sponsor. They told the aide to file the amendment claiming that his boss, the member, had signed off on it. None of this was true; if it weren't for the member's regular communication the lobbyist would have succeeded in controlling the legislative agenda."

"...A freshman member had a bill that the special interests didn't like. With the help of a fellow member, he obtained a Senate sponsor. The bill passed the House, but was being heavily lobbied against on the Senate side. The sponsor of the Senate companion confided in the lobbyist he had no vested interest in the bill, having filed it as a favor to another House member, and advised the lobbyist to simply ask that House member to kill it, breaking trust with his own colleague. In perpetuating this type of culture, we are often asked to betray each other."

"...Several freshman members went to a senior member with good amendments to a bill under consideration. They were stunned when rather than discussing the amendment he directed them to one of the special interests to obtain their

*approval of the language. They made two additional attempts to discuss policy with this member. In all three of the discussions, they were told to seek the opinion of three different lobbyists. He never even bothered to understand the amendments' language. Clearly, the policy wasn't the issue."*

It's no wonder good public policy is hard to come by. It's no wonder people grow cynical and don't trust the very representatives they elected. This is dangerous for our state.

There will always be people who try to influence legislation. That's politics. We have to overcome politics and restore accountability to our government making sure it answers to the taxpayers who fund it.

## **Special Interest Thrive When There is No Agenda**

Without an agenda and real solutions, special interests have the upper hand. With no plan of their own, legislators frequently devote time and energy to the special interests' agenda. While some of the concerns that motivate the special interest goals may be good, the legislation that results is often ill-

conceived or rushed through for a purely political purpose.

Without a plan, members of an organization act, but they don't work together. Each member pursues his or her own goals, and too often these goals are influenced by some status quo- seeking special interest, not the best interests of the State. Leadership creating an agenda void, allows the opening the special interests need to capture the resources of the members' time and energy. When there's no agenda, meaningful policy initiatives do not exist. Personal grudges become absolute roadblocks to the real progress we need to make Florida a better state. Without leadership putting forth an agenda, some members take on bills backed by some special interest group and develop a fierce and unreasoning loyalty - both to the special interest and the bill itself. Without an agenda, members fall in love with their own bill, regardless of whether it is efficient and effective policy. Anchorless, drifting, and seeking solid ground, leaderless legislators squander the limited resource of their time on inoffensive pet projects designed to please narrow constituencies, help them justify their efforts in getting elected, or perhaps buttress their self-worth. These can have the appearance of harmless diversions, but they serve as distractions from the real work we have to do to

improve Florida. The problems we face are big, and we need solutions equal to the task.

Want to see how leadership's lack of an agenda is benefiting special interests? Take a look at the campaign

reports.

Because

the

leadership

void must

be filled,

special

interest

groups

know the

most

efficient

use of their

money is

giving it

where they

have the

best chance

of making

their

agenda the

### Ego as proxy for policy

A recent example of the consequences of a lack of clear plan involved a bill characterized almost unanimously as good policy. Though its passage would have had a profound impact on education, greatly benefitting schoolchildren throughout the state, the bill was voted against by a key legislator who was angry at another member's lack of support for his "special interest legislation". He was so married to the legislation that he allowed his ego or hurt feelings to become his focus, and his judgment was completely compromised.

focus of legislative attention. It shouldn't be surprising that the most influential committee chairs raise far more in contributions than their counterparts on less prominent committees. No one really believes that the influential committee chair is five or ten times as good of a fundraiser as the less powerful chair. The truth, as everyone knows, is that the special interests are constantly on the lookout for opportunities to insert their agenda. Members allow this to enlarge their campaign coffers and use their position and the institution for their own selfish gain. They begin to at times operate with a mentality that the Legislature exists to serve not the people's interests, but their own. Which brings us to self-promotion.

## Self-Promotion

The public perceives that we're suffering from a leadership deficit. They think their leaders have been focused on promoting personal agendas and advancing their own political careers, not delivering real results for the people of Florida. Let's face it – in part, this is true. Since time in the Legislature is by law limited,

### Thinking about the future right after the first successful run for public office:

If you were given the opportunity to preside over a committee that would shape the law in the fourth most populous state in the country, a state with considerable influence over the nation's direction, a state with a population of over 19 million residents in the greatest country on the world. Would that be enough for you?

some have come to view the opportunity of the office itself as limited and as a mere stepping-stone to greater offices. The special interests use the false notion that the Legislature is



not a place for significant contributions to our state to take advantage of members and aggressively work to create a culture of self-interest by promising elected officials help in their future political endeavors - in exchange for support now. Increasingly, this is what's happening in our legislature right now, and it's real and troubling.

When members begin their service in the state Legislature, they are tempted to enter into this culture of self-promotion. They are courted by the special interests, and many members become blind to the opportunities that exist to improve our state. They become blind because there isn't enough real leadership or an agenda to show these members what we could do if we worked together. Within a week of taking the oath of office, Floridians have witnessed their elected officials not only declare intent to pursue a higher or more permanent office, but actively seek support from newly elected members. These members, some with only two weeks of service behind them, are faced with an undeniable reality. Every one of their bills may live or die under the auspices of leaders now asking for their support for higher office. This should never be the way members are treated nor is it the way positions of leadership should be used. Leadership is about service, not advancing your own career. Yet,

because self-promotion dominates, this abuse of leadership is often viewed as a normal, part of the process. This must change. This self-promotion phenomenon is damaging our Legislature. When the Legislature is seen as a whistle-stop on a greater political journey, the decisions made by its members are expedient, rather than invested, self-interested rather than focused on the best interest of Florida.

## **Self-Preservation**

Where does this culture come from? What makes good people compromise their values? What causes them to betray each other and their own consciences? Edmund Burke asserted, “The concessions of the weak are the concessions of *fear*.”

The fear of losing can haunt elected officials as soon as they take office. They fear for their political futures. This can lead to paralysis - a member acting solely on the basis of self-preservation will choose the safest course of action rather than the right course of action. In self-preservation mode, the process itself becomes driven by fear.

## **Fear Results in Efforts to Appease the Media**

Many members fear negative media coverage. They mistakenly assume one can control what the media chooses to report by “laying low” and playing it safe and refusing to put ideas on the table. The reality is that the media will never be controlled. They will write the stories that sell papers and serve their agenda. The media’s lack of interest in substantive issues is evidenced by the response to Marco Rubio’s 100 Ideas book. Rather than relating the groundbreaking effort to solicit legislative solutions from Florida’s citizens, their reporting focused almost solely on critiques of spending on a legislative construction project geared towards minimizing special interest influence. Not until the press was confronted directly with information from the book about the elimination of property taxes (nearly three months after its publication) did they report the bold ideas it contained.

## Fear Results in Inaction

In self-preservation mode, fear prevents some members from acting. Fear stifles a member's talent and his or her ability to be an effective representative of constituents. But there is a more subtle form of self-preservation that can also be dangerous to our mission. This form often manifests as a simple "no" vote, with no alternative solution offered. One member often reminds us, "Anyone can say no; anyone can tear down another's ideas, but there are only a few that can build." Though attention and even public admiration can be gathered with a "no" vote, we believe that voting "no" without offering a viable alternative is the most cowardly position a public official can take. A "no" vote in this case simply refutes another's idea- it offers no alternative, is based on no guiding philosophy, and is often cast to escape from political pressure. That's unacceptable. If you vote "no,"

Voting 'No' to appease or from fear is not the act of a leader, but rather the act of a coward. A 'No' vote should be accompanied by an alternative.

you have a responsibility to bring your own plan to the table. Of course, there are times when a “no” vote is the necessary and right response. It’s important for members to be able to say “no” to peers who have personal agendas. Certainly in the case of a violated conscience of Constitutional concern, a “no” vote is the courageous and right response. And when cast to promote the philosophy of limited government, a “no” vote is necessary. This type of “no” vote, however, is never cast out of fear, self-preservation, or self-promotion, but comes from the desire to see solutions consistent with our mission.

### **Statesman or Status Quo Moments**

Recently a member was approached by a person of political influence. Connected and popular, he approached the member to offer his “friendship for life”, conditioned upon the member’s support of the multi-billion dollar interest he represents.

The member was faced with a statesman or status quo moment. By voting in favor of the interest he would secure the good graces of this man and his considerable political connections. Of course, the converse, though not directly stated, was also true. It was clear that by not supporting the request the member risked opposition perhaps even in the form of an election challenge.

The member, ignoring self-preservation, acted true to his conscience. As a consequence, that member faced a challenger- supported by the very individual and special interests who were denied. The special interests trade favor for compliance. Conscience demands courage. The irony is that courage and conscience often win despite the threats of special interest. Upon hearing of the circumstances, fellow members pledged their support. Despite opposition and the threats of the special interests, the member won re-election.

Courageous leadership matters because special interests are powerful. Though the pressure is real, there are those who have the courage to lead.

No, not all stories end this way. There will be times when the special interests are able to make good on their threats. We must ask ourselves at what cost will we retain our personal power, our influence, and our seats. A member not concerned with self-preservation or self-promotion would have the courage to say, as this member did, that at the end of the day it simply isn't worth keeping the seat if you're forced to do the will of special interests, not Florida's voters. It's not an easy fight, but it can be won if we work together. Though an occasional battle may be lost, the war against the special interests will be won. But to win, we have to have the courage to say "enough is enough." Florida voters deserve a better government than they are getting.

In 1836, battles at two historic forts, the Alamo and Goliad, took place only three weeks apart. Only one is well remembered. Many of the facts surrounding the conflicts are similar: Both forts guarded important roads that, left unguarded, would allow the Mexican army to attack free Texas settlements. Both battles involved hundreds of Texans whose lives and freedoms were threatened by the armies of General Santa Anna.

Both had little chance of victory, outnumbered and undersupplied.

The soldiers at the Alamo, however, were led by William Travis, Davy Crockett, and James Bowie, men who vowed they would “never surrender or retreat”. Though no one from the Alamo survived the brutal attack of Santa Anna’s army, the battle has become “the most celebrated military engagement in Texas history”.

At Goliad, however, Captain James Farin surrendered to Santa Anna’s representative, who claimed that Farin and his officers would be delivered to New Orleans soon afterward. The terms (unknownst to his men) required the soldiers to “become prisoners of war at the disposal of the Supreme Mexican Government.” Believing they were on the way to freedom, the soldiers, including Farin, were

Just as at the Alamo, no one from Goliad survived Santa Anna’s army. One leader sought his own survival over all else and failed. The other sought what was right above all else and succeeded.



led down deserted roads, executed, and buried in a common grave.

In the end, a fearful leader will have to face the consequences of his or her own lack of courage. Taking bold stances and supporting good policy may draw criticism, but the member who does will have done what is right, even if at the time boldness appears to be "bad politics". He or she will become known as a fighter and one to be counted on in the midst of the battle.

In confronting the brutal facts that face us, we've committed to creating a new culture in the Florida House. This culture will produce an environment of great ideas and real solutions because it is free from the fear that has dominated the past. We know the importance of banding together to push back against those who try to control and intimidate individual members in their attempts to direct the dialogue. We will not allow self-preservation or self-promotion to be a factor for us; we will war against it. We will be driven instead by a bold vision, and will be principled, selfless leaders who are committed to making our government more efficient, effective, and accountable. Now we must determine our plan of action. After all, what's the use of undertaking the journey if you're not on the right road?

## Chapter 3



### *Agenda and Goals*

*"It is no use saying, 'We are doing our best'.  
You have to succeed in doing what is necessary."*

*– Winston Churchill*

Scottish immigrant and American success story Andrew Carnegie once said, "Teamwork...is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results." Rising from poverty to become one of the most successful American businessmen of all time, Andrew Carnegie had a goal- to create the most

successful steel business in America. Though Carnegie is often praised for his forward thinking, the goals he set for Carnegie Steel proved to be the deciding factor in its success. Though still in its early stages, Carnegie envisioned a time when steel production would become faster, better, and cheaper as a result of chemical reactions used in the furnace blasting process. To accomplish this goal, he employed a chemist at his iron-production business. Though the move was called foolhardy by others and did not bear immediate fruit, it proved to be the defining moment for U.S. Steel's future. In his autobiography, Carnegie recalled, *"It was years after we had taken chemistry to guide us that it was said by the proprietors of other furnaces that they could not afford to employ a chemist. Had they known the truth they would have known that they could not afford to be without one."*

## **We'll Set Big Goals**

Carnegie's forward thinking is an example of what Jim Collins defined as a Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG) in his book *Built to Last*. A BHAG is described as "huge and daunting", but also "clear, compelling, and [one that] people get right away". Carnegie's BHAG was certainly a daunting one in 1870, but the audaciousness of his goal led US Steel to become the largest and most successful metals company of all time,

producing more steel than the entire country of Great Britain- the one-time leader of the Industrial Revolution. BHAGs drive an institution to proactive “offense” thinking, while avoiding the purely reactionary defense. Big ideas keep us focused on the future and prevent us from getting bogged down in putting out fires. They make us focus well beyond self-preservation and self-promotion.

Bold ideas keep us focused on our mission and give us direction and move us well beyond self-promotion and self-preservation.

Legislators, faced with competing demands from the media, special interests, constituency groups at odds with each other, the courts and the governor, and even fellow members can get off track. We can get used to responding to the “crisis of the hour”. Many times, the crisis is legitimate, but if we are not being driven by the big picture, we can remain ignorant of the larger issues that caused the crisis to begin with. Not only does this make us miss big opportunities to

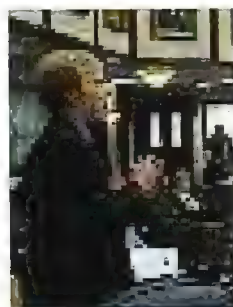
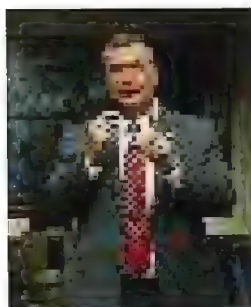
improve life for Floridians, it contributes to the crisis of public confidence in our government. A legislature that only responds to crises is inefficient and ineffective.

We can spend countless hours and energy on the wrong things. As Winston Churchill warned, *"It is no use saying, 'We are doing our best.' You have to succeed in doing what is necessary."*

Bold ideas keep us focused on our mission and give us direction. Jeb Bush lived out this idea. Whether you like his politics or not, he was respected because he always had an agenda that featured big ideas. Big ideas that made a positive impact on people's lives drove what he did each day, not the special interests, self-promotion, or self-preservation. That's the kind of leadership we need in Florida today. We need the leadership that's willing to put forward big ideas, and listen to others' big ideas. We need leadership that puts Florida first.

We'll talk specifically about our agenda later, but the spirit can be summed up here: Our plan will be comprised of detailed, effective, real solutions to the challenges Florida faces. Before we can communicate this vision we must ensure that the Legislature itself is able to carry it out. We believe that the Legislature's very foundation is cracked; with the ideas laid out in

this book, we will repair the legislative culture and build our legislative vision on a new and stronger foundation.



## We'll Offer Real Solutions

For too long, our leaders have been afraid of big ideas. But Florida can't afford to wait any longer. We're committed to offering real solutions to the problems Florida faces.

When we finish our time of service, we want to have built a better Florida. In 1959, academic, business, and political leaders in North Carolina had a three-fold vision to *"generate economic activity, engage the talents of local graduates and citizens and carry North Carolina forward to ever-greater prominence and prosperity"*. In carrying it out, they created the Research Triangle Park which provides over 50,000 jobs and helped to revive North Carolina's economy at a time when it was sorely needed. The willingness to pursue bold ideas—to be trailblazers—can change the lives of the people for the better.

The boldness of our vision will also necessitate unity. We will have to work together and stick together to get the job done.



## **We'll be Focused on Results**

We need to honestly evaluate every single one of our proposals. If they work, we should keep them. If they don't, let's improve them. If they don't work, let's start over and find something that does.

We have to be constantly focused on results. Jeb Bush always pointed out during his service to our state, "The only reason not to measure is because you do not care." We must hold our daily decisions up to the light of our mission. Are we committed to passing an honest, accountable, and transparent budget? Are we fulfilling our commitment to putting forward solutions that protect Floridians?

Marco Rubio lead with a book of ideas for great public policy gathered from Floridians from all walks of life. At the end of his term as Speaker the press was critical, reporting that "only 59 percent" of the ideas passed. But that's really only half the story. What do we call a baseball player who fails to get on base seven out of every ten times at bat? We call him a hall of famer. To accomplish 59 percent of a legislative agenda directed, for the first time, by the people's interest rather than the special interests is a massive victory. Implementing big ideas takes time, and as Margaret Thatcher told us, *"You may have to fight a battle more*

*than once in order to win it.”* Only if real leaders are able to withstand the long game will big ideas win in the long run.

## **Our Agenda Will Be Public and Accountable**

Ultimately, the people we serve will measure our success. This can only be accomplished if we are honest about our plan and ask voters to hold us accountable. An honest legislative agenda is announced before the gavel drops on the opening day of session. Some leaders wait until the session has concluded to determine what legislation has passed and then refer to it as a legislative agenda, claiming success. That’s cowardly leadership. Real leaders are willing to be accountable to the people and have their success measured by what they set out to do when the session began, not what they managed to accomplish at the conclusion. Jeb Bush never played “hide the ball” games. He announced his policy plan at the beginning of each session, and he was successful at getting it accomplished because he was committed to the ideas for the long run, and because you can’t keep a good idea down - his ideas had a natural momentum because of their inherent value.

Because we believe in accountability, our goals will be published and made available for the people of Florida and the whole world to see, and we'll ask them to hold us accountable. It will be a true people's agenda for every term, and its success will be measured by the people of Florida. We will create a culture of delivering results year in and year out.

Once we change the culture with the ideas laid out in this book, we'll open the door, to year after year, the legislature proposing a bold agenda for the people, and from the people.

## Chapter 4



### *Leadership*

***“Strange as it sounds, great leaders gain authority by giving it away.”***

***– Admiral James Stockdale***

The mission of an institution is certainly central to its purpose and effectiveness, but without the vital ingredient of leadership, an institution cannot accomplish its goals. Our discussions on leadership provoked a lot of responses. Below is a snapshot of the replies to the question, “What is the true definition of a leader?”

## *What Characteristics Make a True Leader?*

**Integrity:** *"Someone Honest and Truthful"... "Puts honesty above all"*

**Courage:** *"Has an ethical, moral, and philosophical compass"... "Needed to change the country from the state level"*

**Decisive:** *"Makes sound decisions after fact gathering"*

**Vision:** *"Sees the job as a calling"*

**Intelligence:** *"The best leaders have already won before the fight begins...they think"*

**Humility:** *"Has an apathy for personal fame and fortune"... "Selfless"... "Treats others how they want to be treated"*

**Promotes Others:** *"Fosters future leaders"... finds success in the success of others...deflects credit to the team 100 percent of the time"... "doesn't manage...empowers"*

**Endurance:** *"Focused"... "Has intense personal resolve"*

**Winsome:** *"Strives to get 120-0 votes... to include the minority without giving up core values and principles"*

## Seven Traits of Compelling Leaders

Why does it seem that politics consistently corrupts good men and women? It is a perplexing question when one considers that elected officials often give up potential income, leisure time, and personal privacy to serve in public office. The answer lies largely in the absence of key leadership traits. Good leaders must be knowledgeable, selfless, courageous, principled, visionary, have grit, and command respect from others. Without great leaders, the power of politics tends to be a corrupting force. These seven traits will determine who leads the House.

### *Leaders are Knowledgeable*

Benjamin Netanyahu tells the story of asking his father what traits were necessary for leading a government. When his father asked him to give his ideas first, Netanyahu listed convictions, courage, and the ability to act. According to Netanyahu his father replied, "You need that for anything... what you need to lead a country is education' ...and by that he meant an understanding of history, the knowledge to be able to put things in perspective." Leaders must have a significant body of knowledge in order to navigate the process effectively.

The special interests love crises. It allows them to demand quick responses and predict dire results without them. The knowledgeable leader is inoculated to these conditions with an intellectual vaccination. He or she is in a position to make decisions informed by historical facts and logical conclusions, not rash ones, thus avoiding the consequences of uninformed decisions that might have short term political benefits, but hurt our citizens in the long run. Recently, we've seen examples of how special interests manufacture crises to serve their own agenda. In 1999, a special session was called to eliminate the number of portables being used in public schools. Though the number of students being educated in portables had risen by only a few percentage points, the situation was labeled a crisis, and legislation and funding were immediately called for. Without the facts, a legislator will fall victim to the crisis mentality and unwittingly aide those who seek additional funding or power from their manufactured crises. A knowledgeable leader can combat the special interests' self-serving spin with the real facts.

In an era of term limits the special interest and staff are equipped with a level of expertise and institutional knowledge that our membership does not possess. Therefore, we must fill our leadership positions with members that have acquired a level of

knowledge over their subject matter in order to effectively combat the undue influence of special interest and staff.

### ***Leaders are Selfless***

One member described a culture *“committed to serving the people of Florida through selfless leadership that respects the representative roles of its members and encourages bottom-up participation”* as servant leadership. The concept of servant leadership is practiced in many successful corporate cultures. It was created and sustained at Nordstrom by the leaders of the company. Of one of the three Nordstrom brothers that made up the chairman’s office, an employee said: *“Mr. Bruce likes to remind us that he and his brothers were all raised sitting on a shoe sales stool in front of the customer. It’s a literal and figurative posture that we all keep in mind.”* This doesn’t imply that servant leadership should be characterized by subservience; just the opposite. Servant leadership is characterized first by truth-telling. If a bill is bad for Floridians, the servant leader will be courteous, tactful, straightforward, and honest in his or her evaluation. Second, it is characterized by strength that comes from the conviction that being a representative is not about self-promotion or self-preservation, but about serving, protecting, and fighting for the people he or she



represents. As servant leaders who will put progress ahead of politics, we will take the attitude that the best idea wins. It's not productive to worry about who gets the credit, who has seniority, or even which party the idea came from. If an idea is just, right, and based on principle, you pursue it; if not, you don't.

As U.S. Olympic Hockey coach Herb Brooks was fond of saying, we want players who are "more concerned with the name on the front of their jersey than with the name on the back." We need a group of selfless leaders surrounded by others ready to make the same sacrifice for the good of the mission and the people we serve.

### ***Leaders are Courageous***

Courage inspires us because it is uncommon. A leader must be willing to consider the importance of the mission greater than his or her own importance. A leader must be willing to put his or her state's success over personal political gain. When outside pressures bear down on a leader and fear begins to take shape, a great leader must resist the temptation to act in their own interest, recognizing that the he or she has a responsibility to the people of the state.

The greatest enemy of courage is fear. Someone who lacks courage is much more willing to cave at

pivotal moments. When status or power replaces real solutions as a leader's goal, those things, not the best ideas will guide their decisions. A courageous leader must choose to devote him or she to the wellbeing of those served rather than self.

This is the most important trait for any leader we'd consider. Courage is the only trait that will allow a person to make the tough choices Florida needs and to stand up to the special interest and reject self-promotion and self-preservation.

### ***Leaders are Principled***

Principled leaders are loyal, honorable, ethical, and are known for keeping their word. Principled leaders have a strong sense of right and wrong. All leaders base their conduct and lives on one of two foundations- self-interest or principle. Self-interest is the foundation for long term failure. While it is tempting to do what will pacify others temporarily or placate a specific person or group, the long term effects of such decisions create a culture without vision, direction, or solutions. One member shared this powerful advice: "It's easier to hold to your principles 100 percent of the time than it is to hold to them 98 percent of the time. The boundary- your personal moral line- is powerful because you won't cross it; if you have justified doing it once, there's nothing to stop you from doing it again."

Leadership based on established principles leads to long-term success. It continually calls people back to the mission and reminds them why they're in politics: to serve the people. Principles remain solid in the face

### **Forgetting Why We're Here**

One member encountered pragmatic and petty behavior when he asked another member for support for his bill -which was clearly good public policy. The member refused, and in fact stated he planned to kill the legislation on two grounds: 1) his anger at a non-supporter of his pursuit of higher office who *did* support the bill in question and 2) retribution for that non-supporter's negative comment about him found in the comment section under a blog post. Was the bill a violation of his conscience? Of constitutional freedoms? Of fiscal responsibility? No. His reasons had nothing to do with policy, only his pursuit of higher office.

of shifting circumstances, emotions, and pressure from special interests. As one member pointed out, principles also become a mechanism for keeping

leaders on the same page. Common principles assure us that no matter the situation or circumstance, we always know where our team members stand —the principles we stake our lives on never change. Only a leader who stands on principle can be counted on when the going gets tough.

It is vital for leaders to keep the commitments we make. This means that when we have given our word, we never betray it. (This also means that a leader must not give his word lightly, but only after consideration of circumstances and outcomes.) A true leader realizes that keeping his or her word is the single most important indication of his or her character. Though immediate circumstances may seem to present an advantage in breaking a promise, any gain will come at a loss of regard and reputation. Your word is all you have. When you choose to go back on it, you cannot regain the level of trust you once had.

### ***Leaders are Visionary***

We are in the business of ideas. Passing good ones, killing bad ones. We value ideas. We want talented members who contribute ideas leading our chamber. Unlike the member who prides himself or herself on cowardly “no” votes, our leaders must have something

to contribute. Remember, anyone can tear down an idea, only a few can create one.

### ***Leaders have Grit***

A recent *New York Times* article discussed the conclusions of Angela Duckworth, PhD, researching character traits that lead to success: "People who accomplished great things . . . often combined a passion for a single mission with an unswerving dedication to achieve that mission, whatever the obstacles and however long it might take." Duckworth called this quality grit. By using a simple 12 item test to determine a person's level of grit, she has been able to predict success or failure for cadets entering West Point as well as in academic settings. Grit is another way of describing resilience, a quality sorely needed for leaders. We need leaders who are willing to fight for Florida citizens, no matter how powerful the special interests can be. In times of discouragement, a leader with grit is able to rally others to the belief that what's right is worth fighting for. In our discussions with past leaders, we have consistently found that the memories recalled with the most pride and even fondness are those involving a difficult fight for what was right and required the most grit. Grit is first and foremost an internal character trait that convinces the leader that this belief is true.

***Leaders Command Respect from Others***

We like to describe this as “playing well with others.” Leaders should be honest and straightforward, but tactful and courteous as well. A real leader will communicate concerns about another member’s bill well ahead of committee, perhaps even meeting to communicate concerns as well as an intention to vote no. As one member put it, “Principle trumps policy, but respects the people on the other side of it!” Too many use committee as an opportunity to grandstand, offering inane amendments and attempting to expose fellow members to ridicule. Members who display petty or even vicious behavior toward others should not expect to be popular on the playground. We want leaders who know how to work together to get things done.

Of course as one member put it, “a great leader understands it is not just knowledge that is important, but the transformation of knowledge into wisdom.” In order to command respect from others, we must have the humility to use our knowledge in ways that further our mission, not humiliate others.



## Chapter 5

### *9 Ideas to Change the Culture*

*According to Nick Saban, process guarantees success. A good process produces good results. Likewise, if the process is off, the results will suffer.*

*-Forbes Magazine*



## Leadership Starts Here: Transforming the Process

Serious hurdles lay before us as elected officials and policy makers. We know government is broken.

The procedural processes of the past cannot define the future if we are going to obtain the goals we have set. Orson Welles was one of the most influential Hollywood directors of all time. His famous groundbreaking films include *Citizen Kane*, *Othello*, and *A Touch of Evil*. Martin Scorsese tells of Welles advising his cinema photographer Gregg Toland, “Let’s do everything they told us never to do.” The boldness of Orson Welles allowed him to break with established norms leading to great success. We believe that if the House is going to achieve great success, we must challenge many of the current assumptions and be willing to do the things “they told us never to do.”

We believe that our plan to make the Legislature more efficient, effective, and accountable is the solution to our broken government. As leaders, we must be the first to admit where solutions are needed. We’ve committed to what Jim Collins calls a “transformational BHAG” -one which “seeks to change an existing status for the good of the institution and the benefit of all who are affected by it”. As leaders, we will implement nine solutions for transforming the process:

Pledge: We will raise the bar of ethical behavior.

Problem: Whether actual or apparent, the use of elected office to further one's future career is unsettling to the public and raises ethical concerns. Although there is a lobbying ban that prohibits former members from lobbying the Legislature, former members are permitted to immediately lobby the executive branch upon leaving office.

**Solution 1:**

*We will immediately pass legislation to ensure:*

- The amendment of the two-year ban on lobbying so that any former legislator (after the law becomes effective) would be banned from lobbying either the legislature or the executive branch, including agency lobbying and we would expand the ban from two years to five.
- That no member leaving the Florida Legislature may be employed with state government, or an agency or entity funded by the state for two years with the exception of elected offices, governor-appointed positions (such as Agency heads), or return to a job held prior to the member's election as a state Legislator. Additionally, we would seek reforms that would

make a member's change in job status during the member's time in the Florida Legislature fully transparent.

Problem: The lure of higher office and self-promotion causes the Legislature to be viewed as a stepping stone, not as an important institution affecting the lives and future of every Floridian.

### **Solution 2:**

*Leaders agree not to use their position to assist them in pursuit of future office prior to the conclusion of the second regular session.*

- Leaders have one responsibility: serving the people of Florida. But the current culture has pushed too many members to choose the next office they would like to serve in even before they begin their term of leadership in the Florida House. There is nothing wrong with individuals wanting to continue to serve Florida in the future. Our concern is when their future ambitions are tainting or influencing their current actions. Because perception is crucial to establishing trust and confidence from those we serve,

we are obligated to respond. Our response is to require any member who wishes to serve in a leadership role to take a pledge not to seek any another elected office, at any level of government, until after the completion of the second regular session. The pledge would prohibit the member from having a campaign account, from announcing their intent to seek a particular office or appointment, and from taking any other overt action to obtain such position. After sine die of the second regular session the member could open campaign accounts, solicit contributions, or seek appointment in some government capacity. Members in leadership positions who break their pledge will forfeit their chairmanship or other leadership position. But those who keep their pledge will receive the assistance and protection from other members declaring against them. The leadership team will refuse to meet with individuals or representatives of entities who make donations to the member who seeks to take political advantage of a policy designed to promote ethical practices. The public will have greater confidence in the Florida

House when we hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards.

- Openness and transparency will characterize all the aspects of conforming bills, implementing bills, and proviso language.

Pledge: We will eliminate the top-down structure that drives a wedge between leadership and members.

Problem: Traditionally, the Speaker's power is concentrated, and he can make many significant decisions affecting many aspects of how the House will operate with very little input from other members. The Speaker distributes leadership positions, chairmanships, sub-committee chairmanships, and committee assignments. The whole process has always appeared heavy-handed and intimidating.

### **Solution 3:**

*Everyone in the House has been chosen by the people of Florida, and every member deserves to have their voice heard. Meaningful input should be allowed from different perspectives as to who can serve the House in the available capacities.*

- *Committee chairmen should have input as to who serves on their committees.*
- *Members should know who the chair of a committee will be and then have an opportunity to “apply” or request to serve with that chairman.*
- *The Minority Leader should be allowed input about where members of the minority caucus can serve.*

Although this process is more time consuming, and certainly reduces the Speaker’s power, it allows far more participation. Committee chairs have a chance to offer their opinion as to which members could serve the committee goals best. Members would have an opportunity to meet with the different chairman to discuss the committee priorities and goals and either offer to participate, or decide that greater opportunities for service may exist elsewhere. The Minority Leader would be allowed to participate in deploying the talent and interest of the minority in a way that would maximize the time and energy of the minority in working to make Florida a better place.

Certainly not everyone would necessarily obtain every position they want, but it would be a

process that would enhance the chances of ensuring that the right people are placed in positions where they can best serve Florida voters. When a committee chairperson participates in choosing their own members, and those members have an opportunity to request that appointment (and if a member of the minority party, the minority leader was allowed input), individuals are accountable to the committee chair and their leadership.

Under our leadership model, we would do even more of what we “were told not to do” by allowing the committee chair to designate his or her subcommittee chairs, spreading the responsibility for and ownership of the mission to the whole team. This style of leadership will bring about mutual respect since as Admiral James Stockdale said, “Strange as it sounds, great leaders gain authority by giving it away.”

Problem: In the pyramid of power and under term limits, Speakers have traditionally chosen upperclassmen to fill all leadership positions so that responsibility and influence is distributed on the basis of “seniority” rather than on the basis of merit.

**Solution 4:**

*Leadership positions and committee seats will be filled on the basis of merit and leadership potential.*

Election to the Florida House of Representatives is a great honor. A member has the constitutional right to file legislation and to vote their conscience. We would never take any steps that would abolish these absolute rights. A member does not have a constitutional right, however, to serve in any specific capacity, nor does the passage of time create additional constitutional or absolute rights. Each member has been elected, each member takes the same oath of office, and the House has the right to expect that each member will make every effort to serve the people. Therefore no member should expect a chairmanship or sub-committee chairmanship simply because they have served for a certain number of years. Likewise, a member should not feel excluded or prevented from serving in a position simple because they have not served for a certain number of years.

To the greatest extent possible, we desire everyone to be able to serve in a position that would best serve the people of Florida based on demonstrated merit. As chairmen consider whom they would like to serve with



them on their committees and the individuals to serve as subcommittee chairs, we would expect them to choose, on the basis of merit and the criteria to follow. Their choice would be from the entire committee membership and could be from any of the classes.

Decisions will be based on member expertise and who they believe will best serve the mission. This expands the opportunity for the Florida House to function on the basis of merit. When it comes to leadership, it shouldn't matter how long you've been here or where you're from. We should only care about your ability to get the job done, and that's the criteria we're going to use.

Problem: Speakers make referrals to both the substantive committees and also to sub-committees. This not only concentrates power only in the Speaker, it limits the referral process to the Speaker's understanding of the bill.

#### **Solution 5:**

*The Speaker makes initial bill referrals, but committee chairs would have the authority to refer the bill to any of the sub-committees.*

The Speaker's initial referral of a bill is based on the Speaker's understanding of the bill at the time it was

filed. The referral process is intended to serve the House. Bills should be referred to where the expertise exists to efficiently handle the bill. In addition to expertise, workload, staffing, related bills, and proposed committee bills all affect the referral process. By allowing sub-committee referral by the committee chair, more of these other considerations may be considered, and the House as an institution benefits.

While we serve, committee chairmen will have the power to decide whether a bill is referred to subcommittee, and if so, to which subcommittee or subcommittees the chair deems appropriate.

Problem: Members spend their time and energy working on and voting on bills that may have little chance of passing. Leadership allowing these valuable and limited resources to be wasted leads members to conclude that very little respect is given to the membership. Members often feel that their ideas and input are overlooked in the process.

#### **Solution 6:**

- *We will create a Policy Appeals Council that will allow members a broader range of input, help maximize members time and energy, and allow*

*members an alternative when they think their bill is worthy of a committee hearing and the committee chair has failed to recognize the bill's merit.*

We have 60 days (really about 35) in which to accomplish the work of the Florida House. This includes passing a budget that meets Florida's needs and also passing great public policy that helps achieve the goal of making Florida a better place after our service than it was before our service. We should streamline the process to increase efficiency of members' time and energy and at the same time create confidence among the membership that there has been serious consideration of their ideas from a range of perspectives.

One step we can take to help achieve this goal is the creation of Policy Appeals Council. The Council would be made up of a fair representation of members who would evaluate bills or ideas for bills, considering the issues importance to the House, likelihood of passage in the Senate, and possible veto by the Governor, among other relevant considerations. The Policy Appeals Council would not base a recommendation on any single factor, but would balance all appropriate considerations before making a recommendation. The Policy Appeals Council will

communicate their thoughts to the membership. If the Council deems the bill worthy, it will force a hearing in the committee to which it was assigned; thus an appeal to the policy council will serve the state House much like the discharge petition serves in our U.S. Congress. The Council serves members, respects their intelligence, values their time, and allows them the chance to avoid becoming overly committed to specific bills that may have little chance of becoming law. Of course, members may have other reasons including having a deeply held belief that certain legislation should be filed even if the timing or other needs of the House make passage unlikely.

- *Ideas and bills of merit will have a better chance to be heard.*

We need real solutions today in Florida, and we're willing to listen to every idea. To this end, we will institute an unlimited concept week known as *January Madness*, loosely modeled on Microsoft's "Think Week". During pre-filing, every member will have six minutes to offer his or her ideas for legislation in the upcoming session. This would likely be done on the floor in the Committee of the Whole. Allowing members to be heard will lessen the chance for the House to miss opportunities to consider worthy legislation. The goal would be to ensure that if the members were

interested, the normal rules and procedures would not stand as insurmountable obstacles preventing the House from considering their ideas. Members will also get valuable feedback on bills that may have little chance of passing or that may need to be further developed before filing. But if there is enough interest, no single committee chair or partisan prejudice will prevent an idea's consideration.

Problem: Attempts to distribute power in the past have met with limited success since they were not memorialized in writing and therefore did not change culture in the long-term.

### **Solution 7:**

*Bring about permanent cultural change in the Legislature by means of memorializing our blueprint.*

Given the transient nature of the House, the guidelines by which we will operate must be made public. This written and published version of how we will govern the House provides accountability for us, develops confidence in the membership, and will help ensure that the culture is changed for the better permanently. We want all those who come after us to

benefit from our efforts to improve the way that the Florida House serves the people of Florida.

Pledge: We will work to make the time members spend “in session” on the floor productive, useful, and meaningful for Florida’s people. We’ll make sure we’re doing the people’s business.

Problem: Wasted Floor Time. What should be a productive time and a useful expenditure of a member’s energy has become an arena for adversarial and frequently petty behavior often designed to garner press coverage or to assist a special interest.

### **Solution 8:**

*Eliminate the second day of a bill being heard on the floor by using the Committee of the Whole.*

Because of arcane rules, it currently takes a minimum of two days of floor time to hear a bill. Rather than wasting two days for the Legislature to amend, debate, and vote on a bill, with the agreement of both parties, it can be done in one day in the Committee of the Whole. This process can be accomplished by a simple Rule adoption. With this simple change, the bill is heard one time on the floor

and a member of the public who has an interest and wishes to watch the debate live in the House may do so in a single day.

Pledge: Members will be equipped to maximize their time and energy in responding to a fluid agenda.

Problem: Decisions designed as cost-saving measures hinder members' abilities to keep current with an agenda that is fluid, and we are forced to compete on un-equal footing with those who wish to influence the process. This is especially disadvantageous during the end of session, when a member needs constant updates about a bill's status, proposed amendments, and competing legislation.

#### **Solution 9:**

- *Technology will be made available that allows members the same access to real-time information as other participants in the system benefit from.*

We will ensure that members, the people voting on the bills, have the same tools as the special interests that seek to dominate the process. Technologies exist that would provide members with the tools

they need to keep informed of legislative action in real-time. Representatives of the special interests, but not members of the House use this technology and these tools. The people's representatives need to be just as informed as the special interests. Although wiring the chamber to allow the use of this new technological tool may cost money, it's an investment in equipping our members so they may more effectively use their time and energy to successfully face the challenges posed by those who wish to cloud the real issues. Though cost-savings is important, we should never knowingly allow the special interests to place the members on defense without the tools they need to respond.

- *Funding changes will allow legislative aides to travel for committee weeks, helping to level the playing field for legislators faced with heavily staffed lobbyists.*

Members should devote their attention to the matters under consideration, not the details of when and where those considerations may take place. The point made through-out this book is that the resources members devote in their service to the Florida House are their time and their energy. These are limited resources. To require members to squander these valuable resources on scheduling and other



administrative tasks may save some travel money, but does not serve Floridians. It isn't cost effective.

## Chapter 6



### Legacy

*“Remembering that I’ll be dead soon is the most important tool I’ve ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything - all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure - these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important.”*

*– Steve Jobs*

We will all leave a legacy. Some will leave legacies that are truly gifts to future generations while others make choices that result in a legacy of burden. This

should cause us to pause and consider why we're doing what we're doing. What we value the most will determine what kind of legacy we leave.

Every generation says they want better lives for their children, but in order for us to bring this to pass we must make tough choices. It means that we must trade one idea for another, one passion for another. If we value courage, we must give up comfort; if we value self-sacrifice, then we must give up power; if we value long term prosperity, we must give up short-term indulgence. There is always a trade-off. Legacies are built on choices.

We are drawn to the great legacies of history because we know that those who left them chose the better path. Those that chose to sacrifice gave gifts of incalculable value to future generations. Mother Teresa traded comfort to leave us with the idea that all life matters, and we must have a role in defending it. Winston Churchill chose the loss of his personal reputation. His legacy is the freedom of the Western world. Lincoln's legacy cost him his life, but he left a free and united country that remains a beacon of hope in the world.

Our legacy may be forged in fires of resistance to the new culture to which we have committed. There may be times where we hear the call to retreat to the

safety of self-preservation, the shelter of self-promotion, or the promises of security and ease made by the special interests. When those times come, we must remember our pledge to leave a legacy of freedom to future generations. We know that Florida deserves better, and we have to fight if we want Florida to be better.

We know some people won't agree with us. Some will choose to continue to allow the special interests to influence the process and continue their unhealthy relationships despite our determinations. We believe that most of those who take this path truly believe they have formed genuine relationships with the special interests. Former presiding officers have spoken with us at length about this delusion. They have described what they believed as a good friendship that included many kind gestures and countless conversations -that ended precisely at the same time as their leadership positions. We know we won't be the exception to the rule.

Whether or not all choose what is right, we will stay true to our values and mission, propose real solutions, and create a permanently changed culture in Tallahassee that restores the confidence of Florida's citizens. Thomas Jefferson said, *"One man with courage is a majority."* A truly courageous leader is

worth more than twenty men who can never act before knowing which way the wind blows.

We believe it is good practice to regularly check ourselves with questions. Our policy questions are an example of this. One member suggested a particularly insightful question: "How much more nobly would I act on an issue or vote if I knew my life would end within a few months?" This question may clarify the issues at hand better than any other. It forces us to consider the good of others and the future, rather than the here and now, and it completely removes fear from the equation. Steve Jobs remarked on the power of this idea: "Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything - all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure - these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important."

We desire future generations to mark our service as a turning point in Florida's history. The time when we turned toward independence and made our government truly accountable to the people who matter most—Florida's citizens. We wish to inspire other leaders- both state and federal- to return to the ideas that have built our country. We believe the resources we have been given are the resources of the

people. We will establish a record of prudence with these resources, returning to the people, year after year, a greater value for what they have entrusted to us. People will come to Florida to experience a renaissance of effective ideas and real results.

Our legacy can only be a gift for future generations if we choose today to put Floridians first—no matter what the cost to our own political careers. Working together, we can create an effective “Blueprint for Florida.”